**The Development of the Freedom of the Press**

- Before the Stamp Act of 1765, most printers in the colonies treated newspapers as any ordinary printing job that is similar to books and pamphlets.  
o Most of the information in these newspapers included reprints of other publications, stories of local interest, literature, advertisements, and opinions.  
o With the introduction of the Stamp Act, the printers became publishers.  
- Samuel Adams, a radical journalist, roused the people by using the colonial press to resist the Stamp Act which eventually was repeal. Adam replied saying, “But YOUR Press has sounded the alarm. YOUR Press has spoken to us the words of truth. It has pointed to this people their dangers and their remedy. It has set before them liberty and slavery…”  
- The American Revolution produced many historic newspapermen. Their strong feelings in support of independence and revolution were poured into their writings, spurring public interest and education on the issue. In the essence, this was the beginning of the press’ role with the government, developing the press freedom that would later be set n the Constitution.  
o After the American Revolution, newspapers reported the financial difficulties created by the worthless American currency and argued against new stamp taxes.  
o Although the Constitution contained a clause for freedom of the press in the Bill of Rights, the government originally set many controls on the press and quieted the opinions of most early journalists. Later, the First Amendment was p-ut on the back burner when the federal government muzzled the press through the use of the Sedition Act of 1978, which made any speech or writings against the U.S. government unlawful.  
o Prior to the 1930s, the Supreme Court position on First Amendment freedoms was to suspend free speech and press if the expressions constituted a “reasonable tendency” to endanger society. These expressions were judged by whether they created a “clear and present danger” to society.  
This was the beginning of press freedom in America, the evolution of the “Fourth Estate”.